



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**RESOURCE SHARING: BUILDING COLLABORATION  
FOR REGIONALIZATION**

by

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September 2005

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**RESOURCE SHARING: BUILDING COLLABORATION FOR  
REGIONALIZATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The major challenge in securing the homeland is to provide for all citizens effective and capable prevention and responsiveness to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive events. States have different homeland security organization structures, priorities, funding strategies, and implementation methods. Consequently, the nation lacks a clear, uniform prevention and response strategy that translates into an overall capability that cannot be qualitatively defined. To combat this situation, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has linked future funding to implementation of a holistic approach to homeland security program strategies, which include implementing intrastate and interstate regional approaches that effectively leverage resource sharing.

North Dakota responded to funding reductions by addressing its first comprehensive statewide regional plan to develop a more efficient and effective homeland security program; however, actual implementation was not realistic. A tiered approach to sharing resources through regionalization means jurisdictional capability levels will be thoroughly examined and homeland security allocations distributed accordingly. Local jurisdictions in North Dakota exhibit very independent attitudes; instituting regionalization, which changes levels of funding, is controversial. Therefore, it was vital to first devise a plan that determined statewide acceptability for a regional approach. It was also deemed necessary to develop standardized baseline equipment lists corresponding to each of the four levels of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capability as defined by DHS. The baseline lists provide specific guidance, direction and clarity for equipment purchasing decisions and circumvents the complex and disjointed method currently in use.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The major challenge in securing the homeland is to provide for all citizens the most efficient and effective capability to prevent, protect, respond to, and recover from a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) event within the context of available funding. States have different homeland security organizational structures and strategies, which ensures inconsistent policies and protocols. Several including North Dakota allocate funds to individual counties in which local homeland security spending decisions are often determined in isolation, thereby, creating vastly different planning, training, exercising, and purchasing priorities. As a result, sharing needed resources to fill capability gaps is implemented haphazardly among local jurisdictions. This lack of uniformity has the net effect of creating weak links in prevention, response and recovery activities throughout the entire nation.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) seems to be cognizant of this situation and has linked future funding to the implementation of a comprehensive approach to homeland security program strategies, which includes implementing intrastate and interstate regional approaches that effectively leverage resource sharing. Consequently, all states need to facilitate an integrated, coordinated methodology for sharing resources applied across geo-political areas to bring a more holistic connectivity to the national homeland security program.

Homeland Security funding taken from areas of the country considered at lower perceived risk was then distributed to accommodate cities and states possessing greater perceived risk and larger population bases. Dramatic funding cuts in many states demand those states leverage dollars and resources to create effective capabilities to prevent and respond. Many terrorist events are planned and destructive devices/materials assembled in rural settings then transported to the target. Residents in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago are very much at risk if states like North Dakota cannot build an effective capability across all prevention and response disciplines.

Beginning April 2004, North Dakota responded to funding reductions by addressing its first comprehensive statewide regional implementation plan to develop a more efficient and effective homeland security program. Due to process complexity

involving local control issues and the legislatively mandated department reorganization, actual implementation was not realistic. Therefore, this thesis will determine stakeholder level of acceptance for a regional concept to serve as an important determinant for policymakers in moving a regionalization process forward. If progress moves past the acceptance phase, various specific regional plan and/or requirement ideas gathered and documented in this initial step will form the precursor to implementation of North Dakota's regional plan predicated upon levels of capability.

The thesis also will document the process used to develop specific equipment lists matched to each of the four levels of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) response as defined in the State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy Program Reference Handbook<sup>1</sup>. The equipment list<sup>2</sup> for each level will be extremely valuable in determining a jurisdiction's particular equipment needs and will assist in determining tiered levels of response.

Instituting a regional homeland security approach in North Dakota as well as other states involves a paradigm shift not only in jurisdictional thinking and operational behavior but also in distribution of financial assistance, which usually dictates political ramifications, at the federal, state, local and tribal levels. The goal of a systems-based approach to build, sustain and improve national preparedness for all threats of natural and technological hazards is through prevention, protection, response and recovery. Each area includes capabilities that require collaboration among multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, including the private sector. The focus of implementing a regional approach will be to build capabilities to prevent and respond.

The methodology used to determine acceptability and the equipment lists is intended to reveal gaps, excess and deficiencies, which aligns directly with the National Preparedness Goal<sup>3</sup> and may have practical application for other states.

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<sup>1</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy Program Reference Handbook*, Appendix B, 15-16.

<sup>2</sup> State of North Dakota, Department of Emergency Services-Division of Homeland Security, *Anchor Community & Baseline Equipment Studies*, August 2005.

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, National Preparedness Goal: *HSPD-8 Implementation Newsletter*, July 25, 2005.

## **A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The genesis of a homeland security regional approach began during Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 when the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) initiated grant funding to support homeland security programs and projects. North Dakota began its plan for sharing equipment and human resources by allocating additional dollars for equipment and training strictly to the state's four largest fire departments. In return, each of the four departments agreed to train and develop mutual aid pacts with smaller fire departments within its own particular geographical quadrant. The plan called for the FY 2001 allocation to concentrate on larger second tier departments in order to enhance regional response capability. Planning efforts were productive and expectations for success grew rapidly.

However, before the plan was finalized, the director of North Dakota Division of Emergency Management unilaterally terminated the effort. As a lifelong resident of North Dakota, he had witnessed the passion and fervor with which the concept of local control was defended. His experience with vehement local response concerning various state agency policies and mandates served as the basis for deciding regionalization and was a huge political liability.

Local resentment concerning a number of issues involving emergency management and homeland security manifested itself in a dramatic lobbying effort in North Dakota producing a media and political firestorm that reached a crescendo in the 2005 Legislative Session.<sup>4</sup> As a result, House Bill 1016<sup>5</sup> completely reorganized the agency, renamed it the Department of Emergency Services (DES) and designated a new director. This significantly affected the decision to ascertain levels of local acceptance before attempting statewide efforts to plan and implement regionalization.

## **B. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Insufficient homeland security funding and inequitable distribution formulas have created an imbalance in states' capability to prevent and respond to a CBRNE event. State and local jurisdictions have not consistently demanded first responder disciplines adopt response protocols that incorporate integration, interoperability and resource

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<sup>4</sup> State of North Dakota, 59<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, 2005-2007.

<sup>5</sup> State of North Dakota, 59<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, 2005-2007, *HB 1016*, August 26, 2005.

sharing through planning, training, and equipment purchases. All these issues have become embroiled in the morass of political maneuvering which adds to confusion when attempting to map consistent federal, state and local policy.

Proponents of a new funding approach hope to strengthen prevention, preparedness and response by providing more dollars to urban initiatives. This is a move opponents fear will leave America's heartland vulnerable to terrorist attack and simultaneously provide terrorists easy access to urban populations by exploiting the weakest links in the nation's security system.

Throughout the nation, homeland security funding impacts 19,429 municipalities, 16,504 towns or townships, 3,034 counties, 50 states and six territories.<sup>6</sup> Proposed funding focuses on a few metropolitan areas and benefits a small fraction of these jurisdictions. In the United States, just 60-65 of the 3,034 counties were designated Urban Area Security Initiatives (UASI) by DHS.<sup>7</sup>

Homeland security is contingent upon providing adequate funding to all response disciplines throughout the nation. Cuts to homeland security funding jeopardize collaborative efforts already underway. For example, law enforcement agencies require funding for information sharing, target hardening, threat recognition, intervention activities and interoperable communications. The proposed prevention funding is weighted toward 50 large cities and decreases funding to more than 80 percent of America's suburban and rural law enforcement agencies.

These cuts make it challenging, if not impossible, for agencies to exchange information. Kenneth L. Morckel, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, and Todd Wurschmidt, Ph.D., Executive Director, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, provided compelling testimony for restoration of funding for Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), on April 14, 2005, during a hearing of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate. Their

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<sup>6</sup> U. S. Senate on the Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for 2006. Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, Kenneth L. Morckel, Director of Ohio Department of Public Safety; Todd Wurschmidt, Ph.D., Executive Director, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, April 14, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*



testimony stated, “The loss of half a billion from thousands of public safety agencies’ budgets will greatly reduce suburban and rural terrorism prevention and first responder efforts.”<sup>8</sup>

Morckel and Wurschmidt based their argument for restoring LETPP funding as a line item, on preventive measures that have taken place as a result of intelligence sharing, including efforts to deter one terrorist bent on blowing up the Brooklyn Bridge prior to his capture in rural Ohio during 2003. This example reinforces arguments that contend the fight against terrorism requires all the nation’s 19,000 law enforcement agencies be capable of preventing, detecting, deterring and disrupting terrorism. Morckel and Wurschmidt cite a February 2003 quote from President George W. Bush: “We expect them to be part of our effort; we must give them the tools necessary so they can do their job.”<sup>9</sup>

### **C. FUNDING**

In FY 2004, homeland security funding for North Dakota totaled nearly \$20 million. This infusion enabled an expanded homeland security program to facilitate, not just equipment purchases, but key disaster management programmatic elements including exercising, planning, and training. In addition, the critical role of law enforcement in prevention was significantly enhanced through the LETPP.

In FY 2005, North Dakota’s allocation for the State Homeland Security Grant, LETPP, Citizen Corps and the Emergency Management Performance Grant amounted to \$12,849,748, a \$6,571,252 or 34 percent reduction from the previous fiscal year. In FY 2006, current estimates threaten a nearly \$6 million decrease in the House budget committee version and more than a \$1 million decrease in the Senate version.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> U. S. Senate on the Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for 2006. Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, Kenneth L. Morckel, Director of Ohio Department of Public Safety; Todd Wurschmidt, PhD., Executive Director, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, April 14, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth L. Morckel, Director of Ohio Department of Public Safety; Wurschmidt, Todd, PhD., Executive Director, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. *Statement for the Record*, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate on the Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for 2006. April 14, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Nolan Jones, *A Report from the Homeland Security Advisors Committee of the National Governor’s Homeland Security Advisors Conference, National Governor’s Association, Comparison of First Responder Grant Legislation, H.R. 1544 and S. 21*, June 2005.

Reductions are specifically keyed to the State Homeland Security Program and do not reflect the decrease in the LETPP, which is earmarked at approximately 25% of the total Homeland Security Grant Program.

Funding has become a premium in North Dakota and further decreases could undermine or potentially destroy progress in fully implementing its homeland security strategy. Redistribution of homeland security funding by congress has already lead to gaps in protection demonstrated by the following four strategic goals specified in the North Dakota Strategic Plan<sup>11</sup> for homeland security:

1. Attain communication interoperability among state and local first responders in North Dakota. The state entered into a contractual obligation with Motorola Corporation for communication infrastructure improvements totaling \$7 million. This project allows state and local first responders to convert from analog to digital signaling. Decreased funding will severely hamper the ability of state entities and local jurisdictions to purchase necessary equipment, which degrades statewide interoperability.

2. Develop a response capability to ensure accurate deployment of resources by the use of the statewide geographic information system (GIS) mapping. North Dakota abandon its efforts to uniformly coordinate GIS mapping for accurate statewide deployment of resources.

3. Improve upon the collection, analysis, fusion, and dissemination of federal, state and local homeland security intelligence. The North Dakota Fusion Center was originally staffed by one full-time intelligence officer. Homeland security funds were used to augment planning capability by adding an individual from State Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Highway Patrol. DES has designated a planning position to become a permanent member of the Fusion Center team. Reduced FY 2006 funding will curtail staffing.

4. Foster sharing of law enforcement sensitive information. A significant portion of homeland security dollars has been invested in North Dakota Criminal Justice Information Sharing system. This complex interactive link between law enforcement and the judicial system provides the means for sharing law enforcement sensitive information. Homeland security funding will be completely severed for this project.

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<sup>11</sup> State of North Dakota, *Homeland Security Strategic Plan*, 2003.

#### **D. POPULATION**

There was a 1.3 percent decrease in state population from April 1, 2002 to July 1, 2003.<sup>12</sup> Out migration is a statewide problem but rural areas are encountering a much more rapid loss. The fastest growing segment of the population consists of individuals 85 years and older.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, there is a severe shortage of trained first responders in the vast majority of North Dakota. Lois Hartman, Executive Director of the North Dakota Firefighters Association, made the following observation: “As a community ages, so do the first responders. Likewise, as people move to larger cities, where there are more opportunities for employment, so do first responders.”<sup>14</sup>

There are 262 communities consisting 500 people or fewer; only nine have more than 10,000 people. The North Dakota Data Center reports that movement for decades by rural residents to larger cities has depopulated much of the state.<sup>15</sup> In the last decade, population growth has occurred mainly in larger cities and counties with tribal governments. In fact, populations in only six of the state’s 53 counties grew between 1990 and 2000.<sup>16</sup> The long-term trend of net out migration is expected to continue. North Dakota tax records between 1998-99 and 2000-01 reveal more wage earners moved out-of-state than into North Dakota, resulting in a loss of income.<sup>17</sup> Facing both external and internal financial constraints in concert with a population reduction, North Dakota’s 350 rural communities simply lack capability to build a capability for response to numerous vulnerabilities.

This is not simply a North Dakota problem. According to a survey conducted by the National League of Cities, less than 40 percent of cities with a population of 10,000

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<sup>12</sup> North Dakota State Data Center, North Dakota State University, *North Dakota Population Projections: 2005 to 2020*, Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics. September 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Telephone conversation between Tom Decker, North Dakota Public Instruction and the author, 5 July 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Lois Hartman, North Dakota Firefighter’s Association, Telephone conversation between Lois Hartman and the author, November 2004.

<sup>15</sup> North Dakota State Data Center, North Dakota State University, *North Dakota Population Projections: 2005 to 2020*. Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics. September 2002.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

or fewer have a terrorism plan in place. Many local jurisdictions, especially small metropolitan and rural communities, lack manpower, expertise and resources to develop a comprehensive emergency response plan.<sup>18</sup>

#### **E. VULNERABILITIES**

It may be credibly argued states with larger populations are at greater risk. However, North Dakota possesses several significant risk factors that affect the entire nation. With a population density slightly exceeding nine people per square mile and much lower in rural areas (fewer than one person per square mile in Slope County),<sup>19</sup> North Dakota is extremely vulnerable.

The most apparent vulnerability stems from the 319-mile border with Canada located along eight sparsely populated rural counties. Literally thousands of unprotected access points creates an ideal port of entry for terrorists who can take advantage of an easy-to-disappear-in environment to bring plans, resources and materials needed to conduct immediate operations or proceed undetected to more high value targets. Amtrak serves the state with two long-distance east/west daily trains and follows a route from Chicago-Minneapolis/St. Paul through North Dakota to Seattle/Portland. Six Amtrak stations are located along the northern portion of the state and could provide an easy means of conveyance to metropolitan areas.<sup>20</sup>

Minot and Grand Forks Air Force Bases represent a large military presence. Both installations have participated in bombing and logistical support campaigns against terrorist organizations and the countries that sponsor them. Minot Air Force Base also houses Intercontinental Ballistics Missiles that are dispersed strategically throughout North Dakota.<sup>21</sup> It is also home to nuclear capable B-52 bombers.

North Dakota has vast reserves of coal; that resource is used to generate power to grids in all or part of seven states and southern Canada. At least two thirds of

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<sup>18</sup> National Association of Development Organizations. *Homeland Security and Regional Councils: Building Local Capacity at the Regional Level*. 2004.

<sup>19</sup> North Dakota State Data Center, North Dakota State University, *North Dakota Population Projections: 2005 to 2020*, Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics. September 2002.

<sup>20</sup>Amtrak,  
[http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=Amtrak/Page/Routes\\_Index\\_Page&c=Page&cid=1080072922209&ssid=4](http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=Amtrak/Page/Routes_Index_Page&c=Page&cid=1080072922209&ssid=4), accessed August 27, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> North Dakota Division of Emergency Management, *Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy Program*, 2003.

Minnesota's power is generated and transmitted from plants in North Dakota. According to the production manager of The Falkirk Mining Company, three generation stations in North Dakota provide major distribution points to areas outside the state. Disruption would ensue if multiple transmission lines were compromised. "The lines don't have to be in an urban area to cause major disruption."<sup>22</sup>

There are oil reserves in the western part of the state and a large refinery located in the south central section. Refined oil products move through pipelines in North Dakota to 12 states. Natural gas produced in North Dakota and Canada travels to several states; the Chicago region is a recipient. The only synthetic fuels plant in the nation is located in North Dakota. It processes more than 6 million tons of coal each year to produce more than 54 billion standard cubic feet of natural gas annually plus several other products including anhydrous ammonia used to make fertilizer, a component in certain types of bombs.

The state also possesses an enormous agricultural infrastructure that could easily be targeted through delivery of biochemical agents or vectors. Introduction of a plant or foreign animal disease, especially one that was zoonotic, would result not only in world economic chaos but also in a human health crisis.

#### **F. INDEPENDENT ATTITUDES**

Local control is a political ideal held sacred in North Dakota and regionalization conjures fear of losing decision-making power and influence. Local, tribal and state authorities still maintain certain parochial attitudes and embrace the concept of sharing human and equipment resources when it benefits individual interests. Independent attitudes within small communities have and will continue blocking cooperative efforts to achieve common goals. However, in recent years, out migration and the agricultural economy have eroded human and financial resources to a point that some communities have concluded continued existence requires a transition toward human, equipment and financial resource sharing as demonstrated by consolidation of fire, ambulance and educational services.

Currently, the state's 53 counties act in their own interest as self-contained, stove-piped entities. Past purchases of equipment through ODP resemble an unassembled

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<sup>22</sup> Randy Crooke, The Falkirk Mining Company, Washburn, North Dakota, Telephone conversation between Randy Crooks and the author, August 27, 2005.

puzzle. Pieces of needed equipment are scattered throughout several communities while coordination required to assemble an effective response is lacking. Because there is no current standardized equipment procurement system, mistakes have occurred, exemplified by one western North Dakota fire department's purchase of equipment no one was qualified to operate.

## **G. POLITICAL**

Blistering commentaries by politicians and media concerning purchases of “boots, suits, and robots”<sup>23</sup> regarding past allocations of homeland security funding underscore the need for such guidance. The city of Grand Forks, North Dakota came under heavy fire by media outlets, in *USA Today* and *Boston Globe* articles for its purchases of a semi-armored van, decontamination tents, a bomb-detecting robot and bomb suit. The same *USA Today* article also quoted a Zanesville, Ohio, hazardous materials coordinator as saying, “It’s better than Christmas.”<sup>24</sup> These comments give the appearance of haphazard and cavalier attitudes regarding equipment purchases. Representative Christopher Cox, R-California, chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, includes such articles showing these attitudes on his website<sup>25</sup> to buttress the argument that funding should be directed to more heavily populated areas by virtue of the greater perceived risk.

An effective public counter argument has never been offered. However, in a critical situation involving an arsenal of explosives and a running gun battle, it took three hours for the state’s only bomb robot to arrive. Grand Forks County Emergency Manager Jim Campbell echoed the feelings of most North Dakotans when he said, “The citizens of North Dakota deserve the same protection as any other citizen of any other state.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Wayne Baron, North Dakota Division of Homeland Security, Telephone conversation between Wayne Baron and the author, January 15, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> *USA Today*, October 23, 2003, available at [https://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2003-10-29-security-cover-usat\\_x.htm](https://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2003-10-29-security-cover-usat_x.htm), accessed July 29, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Cox, available at <http://homelandsecurity.house.gov/coverage.cfm?id=105>, accessed July 29, 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Brian Macquarrie, Urban Regions Fight Security Funds Formula, *The Boston Globe*, available at [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2005/03/21/urban\\_regions\\_fight\\_security\\_funds\\_formula/?rss\\_id=Boston%20Globe%20--%20National%20News](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2005/03/21/urban_regions_fight_security_funds_formula/?rss_id=Boston%20Globe%20--%20National%20News), accessed March 22, 2005.

Although the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has produced authorized lists of equipment for local jurisdictions, it has not provided specific lists of equipment necessary for different capability levels within various response disciplines. Hence, choice of equipment often fulfills a wish list based upon wants, rather than needs. This problem has been responsible for claims that the Homeland Security Grant Program has resulted in “toys for boys”<sup>27</sup> and a sense of entitlement when ordering equipment. Reduced homeland security grant money will further compound difficulty in purchasing necessary equipment.

#### **H. EQUIPMENT PURCHASING CONFUSION**

The equipment list provided by DHS evolved from a categorical list of fewer than 50 items to a complex web-based system containing hundreds of qualifying items. Small, volunteer first responder departments do not possess the expertise or time to fully research all equipment options available for procurement. DES, along with a myriad number of other states, has received numerous requests from first responders for guidance in purchasing decisions but DHS has not provided a specific authorized list of equipment necessary to different capability levels within various response disciplines.

Though national initiatives are currently pursuing development of a Universal Task List (UTL)<sup>28</sup> and Target Capabilities List (TCL)<sup>29</sup> based on a series of national planning scenarios that eventually link specific equipment by WMD response level, the process has been slow to ground final products with local first responders.

In summary, the inability to achieve an adequate level of federal funding to meet strategic goals within the state homeland security strategy is a serious problem encountered by North Dakota as well as other states in developing a comprehensive homeland security prevention, preparedness and response capability. Independent attitudes, often a key ingredient for survival in a rural environment, fail to foster the cooperation necessary to create the most efficient use of available resources. These

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<sup>27</sup> Wayne Baron, North Dakota Division of Homeland Security, Telephone conversation between Wayne Baron and the author, January 15 2005.

<sup>28</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *Universal Task List*, July 30, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness, *Target Capabilities List, Version 1.1*, May 23, 2005.

challenges will prove difficult to overcome due to a lack of professional response personnel, with limited resources, literally spread over thousands of square miles.

North Dakota utilized the Statewide Template Initiative<sup>30</sup> supported by the federal Homeland Security Advisory Council, and outlined in the document, National Strategy for Homeland Security<sup>31</sup> for the development of a comprehensive strategy encouraging citizen participation in the Homeland Security preparedness effort<sup>32</sup> and following the supporting standards designated in Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-8.<sup>33</sup>

## **I. SOLUTION**

One of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) overarching national priorities is to expand regionalization. The *National Preparedness Guidance, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8: National Preparedness*, states, "As we develop Federal assistance programs in FY 2006 and beyond, our focus will be to leverage our homeland security resources in order to achieve the highest possible readiness."<sup>34</sup>

Upon introspection, the major impediment in implementing a regional tiered prevention, preparedness and response capability has been lack of initiative. Clearly, it is time to overcome inertia and leverage resources to build a process in which all stakeholders throughout the state are consulted and asked to collaborate in helping design a statewide regional plan to build a comprehensive homeland security prevention and response strategy.

To begin the regionalization process, North Dakota implemented the Anchor Community study<sup>35</sup> to determine acceptance levels for a statewide regional approach based upon jurisdictional resource sharing that ensures a tiered capability to effectively plan for, prevent and respond to a CBRNE event. Anchor communities are defined as

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<sup>30</sup> President's Homeland Security Advisory Council, *Statewide Template Initiative*, available at [http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Statewide\\_Template\\_Initiative.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Statewide_Template_Initiative.pdf), accessed June 29, 2005.

<sup>31</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, July, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> Homeland Security Advisory Council, *Guiding Principles of Homeland Security Studies*, available at [http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/HSAC\\_GuidingPrinciplesHSSStudies\\_1204.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/HSAC_GuidingPrinciplesHSSStudies_1204.pdf), accessed June 29, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-8*, December 17, 2003, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031217-6.html>, accessed June 29, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Preparedness Guidance, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8: National Preparedness*. April 27, 2005.

<sup>35</sup> State of North Dakota, Department of Emergency Services-Division of Homeland Security, *Anchor Community and Baseline Equipment Studies*, August 2005.



entities that facilitate statewide sharing of resources, including personnel, equipment, training, exercising and planning. A Baseline Equipment Capability study<sup>36</sup> conducted in concert with the Anchor Community study will produce a document containing lists of specific equipment aligned with the four levels of WMD capability for specific response disciplines including private and public health, hazardous materials (hazmat), fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), public works, emergency management, administration, and public safety communications. Equipment tailored to various jurisdictional capabilities promotes consistency, efficiency and interoperability when planning and developing protocols involved in tiered regional response.

Capability, as defined by a draft discussion paper, *Thinking About National Preparedness: The National Planning Scenarios and Jurisdictional Own-source Capabilities*, is “the potential or actual application of skills and equipment to achieve an operational effect.”<sup>37</sup> An anchor community can be thought of as a capability center that serves as a catalyst to achieve integrated and interoperable resources sharing within a capability cluster or region. Determining various capability levels establishes a method to develop appropriate protocols for a tiered response. By providing baseline equipment lists for the four WMD capability levels, appropriate equipment can be purchased for individual disciplines and applied to specified protocols to achieve the desired operational effect.

Establishing the consensus for a structured response based upon tiered capability levels can be contentious. Regionalization, accomplished through anchor communities, implements a process in which response disciplines and jurisdictions are forced to accurately assess capability levels in order to plan integrated response protocols. The Baseline Equipment Capability study is an integral part of the Anchor Community regional concept. When used in conjunction with the regional capability assessment, it affords insight into actual levels of capability, which reduces false perceptions. The equipment lists serve as specific guidelines and will help stakeholders reach consensus concerning decisions to fund different types and amount of equipment and training.

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<sup>36</sup> State of North Dakota, Department of Emergency Services-Division of Homeland Security, *Anchor Community and Baseline Equipment Studies*, August 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Homeland Security Institute, *Thinking About National Preparedness: The National Planning Scenarios and Jurisdictional Own-source Capabilities*, 2005.

Efforts to develop a baseline equipment list, with insight and direction from first responders and community leaders, coincide with recent efforts by DHS to develop a Target Capabilities List<sup>38</sup> that will measure whether, the nation, drawing upon federal, state, local, tribal, private sector and non-governmental organizations, is prepared for an incident of national significance. These capabilities are based upon the National Response Plan (NRP)<sup>39</sup> and associated critical tasks from the Universal Task List,<sup>40</sup> as well as the list's performance measures and capability elements that include personnel, planning, organization and leadership, equipment and systems, training and exercises, evaluations and corrective actions.

Like the Baseline Equipment Capability study, DHS used a similar vetting process to draw upon the insights of subject matter experts for refinements to its Target Capabilities List. DHS organizes stakeholders in discipline-specific work groups to establish target levels for the nation and apportion responsibility to develop and maintain those levels among all jurisdictions.<sup>41</sup> The Baseline Equipment Capability study will complement these efforts by specifically identifying resources necessary to perform the tasks at various levels of capability.

At the outset, North Dakota's four largest cities appear to be considered anchor communities due to the amount of human and equipment resources available. However, when data such as response times and individual jurisdictional capability are gathered and analyzed, other communities may be considered anchors. For example, the small community of Beulah, population 3,152, relies on a world-class hazmat team located nearby at the nation's only synthetic fuels production plant. This type of capability will certainly be factored into a regional sharing model.

## **J. METHODOLOGY**

This thesis specifically addresses the process of building the foundation for a regional approach through a coordinated effort of utilizing local, state, federal and private

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<sup>38</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness, *Target Capabilities List, Version 1.1*, May 23, 2005.

<sup>39</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Response Plan*, December 2004.

<sup>40</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *Universal Task List*, July 30, 2004.

<sup>41</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Preparedness Goal: HSPD-8 Implementation Newsletter*, July 25, 2005.

sector stakeholders. Although regional approaches implemented by others are outlined, none explain the actual process used to develop the approach. The first phase in implementing a regional approach is determining acceptance.

Chapter one explains rural states, such as North Dakota, face reductions in homeland security funding, increasing vulnerability to terrorist activities and disrupting progress in implementing homeland security strategies and underscores the need for state, local and tribal authorities examine methods to enhance their capabilities to develop protocols for sharing resources.

The second chapter, Crossing Jurisdictional Boundaries, delves into an examination of regional approaches and application by other states. A review of the approaches includes a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), which described various federal agency programs that provide funding allocations based upon regional coordination. Additionally, the chapter discusses findings by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) regarding use of regional approaches to homeland security funding.

Chapter three, Building a Process, focuses on determining the level of acceptance for the Anchor Community regional approach and Baseline Equipment Capability study. Ultimately, the study will answer two questions asked North Dakota first responders who grapple with preparing for and preventing a terrorist attack: What is needed for response at all levels, and how will a community sustain its capability?

In Chapter four, lessons learned from the process to gain a level acceptability for moving forward with a regional approach are highlighted.

Chapter five discusses benefits derived by jurisdictions through a regional approach and concludes by establishing considerations when moving forward with the implementation phase.

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## II. CROSSING JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES

### A. DIFFICULT TASK

In the September 2004, U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report outlined examples of various federal agency programs that provide allocation of funds based upon regional coordination. It supports the Cox-Turner Bill, which provides funding for regional grant applications that coordinate closely with state homeland security strategic plans. One of the main conclusions states, "...regional approaches to manage federal homeland security dollars help to ensure that those funds are spent [in a manner] that is targeted at known security gaps."<sup>42</sup>

However, the report realistically points out inherent difficulty in seeking solutions through regionalization:

Historically, the American governance system, divided into federal, state and local jurisdictions, does not provide a natural vehicle for discussing public policy issues from a regional, multi-jurisdictional perspective. The autonomy of local jurisdictions and competing priorities within and among them makes regional coordination difficult. Efforts that seek to overcome these challenges to coordinate regionally must take into account the different operational structures and civic traditions of states and municipalities.<sup>43</sup>

In fact, supporters of the current system maintain that which is not broken should not be fixed. Although some concern has been expressed, the vast majority of local officials have not complained about the state's homeland security funding formula only the implementation rules and regulations established by DHS and enforced by DES. Some have indicated language in North Dakota Senate Bill 2151<sup>44</sup> provides for a statewide umbrella memorandum of understanding to address most common problems encountered in resource sharing and creates a simple, convenient method by which jurisdictions can initiate the process. Others argue a majority of citizens in North Dakota reside in cities and counties with resources and memorandums of understanding in place

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<sup>42</sup> *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, Report to the Chairman, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, (GAO-04-1009 Homeland Security, September 2004).

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> State of North Dakota, 59<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, 2005-2007, *HB 2151*, April 26, 2005.

to adequately respond to perceived risks. There are people who believe the North Dakota's fledgling Civil Support Team (NDCST), once operational, should be able to provide the necessary response for the state's perceived low risk environment.

Instead of a disorganized approach to form partnerships, the Anchor Community regional concept encompassing equipment needs tied to capability will ensure a tiered resource sharing capability to respond using agreed upon protocols involving various jurisdictional and response disciplines. In contrast to the more independent and isolated process currently in use, the Anchor Community concept provides for necessary coordinated planning, training, and exercising activities between and among disciplines and jurisdictions required to implement a comprehensive approach for sharing resources that is integrated and interoperable. Therefore, region-to-region partnerships will be more easily formalized affording execution of a statewide comprehensive response effort geared for all North Dakota citizens not just a majority. Regionalization will promote strong coordination with NDCST protocols as opposed to using only National Guard resources for response.

## **B. REVIEW OF REGIONALIZATION**

The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) queried its members regarding targeting homeland security funding to regional approaches. Few states responded but each indicated allocations for planning, equipment, training and exercises are based upon a regional approach.<sup>45</sup> For example, Arizona is divided into five homeland security regional advisory councils. The state hired five planners to assist each region with operations and grant administration. Colorado is sectioned into nine regions and, in an attempt to foster agency cooperation and ensure equipment operability, required a collaborative effort to submit one combined application for funding. Delaware officials consider the state one region for Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) funding. Kentucky has 14 state emergency management regions each with a WMD/hazmat team, which receives funding to purchase detection and response equipment. Counties/cities are able to direct local allocations toward building general response capabilities. Tennessee officials have placed 95 counties into 11 homeland security districts, which align with the economic development districts. Each district has

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<sup>45</sup> National Emergency Management Association, Email survey sent to all State Homeland Security Directors, June 2004.

a Homeland Security Council comprised of the various emergency response disciplines, medical and law enforcement as well as elected officials. Utah used the recommendation of the State ODP Advisory Board to establish seven regions based upon predetermined emergency response times and distance. Within the state of Washington, each of the nine regions contains a single county emergency management office designated as the Homeland Security Regional Coordinating Office (HSRCO). HSRCOs provide a central vetting mechanism for achieving regional consensus among the other emergency management offices and responder disciplines within respective counties, cities and tribes. West Virginia allocates funding to its six response regions based upon a number of factors including population density, threat analysis and equipment shortfalls. Groups representing law enforcement, emergency medical services and fire provide input concerning equipment selection, training and planning requirements.

In 2003, the Centre Region COG (State College Borough, College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, Harris, and Patton Townships) in Pennsylvania implemented a regional concept for enhancing emergency management capacities in a cost-effective manner. The municipalities adopted a single emergency management plan, designated a shared operations center, and hire an emergency management coordinator.<sup>46</sup>

The national capital regional compact illustrates that federal, state and local jurisdictions recognize the need to share resources based upon varied levels of capability. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is composed of 19 local governments surrounding the nation's capital, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives. After September 11, 2001, COG developed plans to ensure a coordinated response to terrorist threats and attacks. The jurisdictions developed a Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) for collaboration in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination activities before, during, or after a regional emergency.<sup>47</sup>

In Texas, regional councils have provided an environment that is less parochial, unbiased, apolitical, and therefore, capable of analyzing regional threats and needs on the

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<sup>46</sup> Centre Region Council of Governments, State College Pennsylvania “*Working Together to Improve Emergency Management*,” available at <http://cog.centreconnect.org/emer-mgmt/>, accessed January 7, 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, *Regional Emergency Coordination Plan*, available at <http://www.mwcog.org/security/security/plan.asp>, accessed January 7, 2005.

merits and facts alone. This is more efficient and cost-effective than establishing new regional partnerships or allowing local jurisdictions to plan and act individually.<sup>48</sup>

As stated in the Wirthlin Report (September-October 2002), the majority of local governments have made only modest or no changes to emergency response plans since September 2001. The most common obstacles cited, include political and turf battles; lack of training, equipment and technology; and limited assistance for planning. As regional planning organizations, regional councils have the professional staff, planning tools and background necessary to address and overcome these obstacles.<sup>49</sup>

Local homeland security funding in North Dakota is currently allocated through local and tribal emergency managers who coordinate meetings in which first responding disciplines within each of the 53 counties form consensus for utilizing allocations. State homeland security funding received by each county is determined by a formula that incorporates proximity to the border, population, risk and vulnerability assessments (including agriculture), primary threat elements, legal hazards, full time emergency response personnel, and specialized teams (bomb and hazmat). Although various forms of regionalization (Department of Transportation, Highway Patrol, Health Department, and Bomb) exist in North Dakota, all have been established to provide an outside service to local entities. None have a responsibility to provide funding allocations to local jurisdictions, which control planning, equipment purchases and operational decision making nor were the regions planned using stakeholder input. Therefore, it was decided to design a regional homeland security program from a grassroots perspective but elements of those plans will be reviewed for potential incorporation.

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48 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, *Regional Emergency Coordination Plan*. <http://www.mwcog.org/security/security/plan.asp>, accessed January 7, 2005.

49 National Association of Development Organizations. *Homeland Security and Regional Councils: Building Local Capacity at the Regional Level*. 2004.



### **III. BUILDING A PROCESS**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In its final report, the 9/11 Commission indicated first responders today live in a world transformed by the attacks on September 11, 2001. Commission members stated a “rededication to preparedness is perhaps the best way to honor the memories of those we lost that day.”<sup>50</sup>

What is needed for response at all levels, and how will a community sustain its capability are the two main questions asked by North Dakota first responders who grapple with preparing for and preventing a terrorist attack.

Recognizing future decreases in homeland security funding and changing program initiatives, DES conducted a brainstorming session focused upon quality project development for FY 2005, which resulted in a two-day scoping meeting held December 2004. The planning group consisted of representatives from DHS, and North Dakota Highway Patrol (HP), North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) and DES. Ideas generated during the session resulted in the Anchor Community study and Baseline Equipment Capability study that in concert would form the basis for initiating acceptance and ultimately implementation of the North Dakota regional approach. The group determined acceptance for a regional approach could be gained only if the assessment and initiatives had local origin and buy-in from a working group representing the four major cities/counties of Fargo/Cass, Bismarck/Burleigh, Grand Forks/Grand Forks, and Minot/Ward. Although these entities would not automatically be considered anchor communities, the four possess the greatest capability to provide technical planning and exercise expertise as well as advanced equipment to support other jurisdictions.

Local and tribal emergency managers were briefed concerning the proposed study initiatives at the DES Annual Workshop in late January 2005. In early March 2005, a meeting was held with the four city/county emergency managers to describe the studies and receive input. Each entity received an additional \$50,000 in FY 2005 homeland security planning funds to conduct the studies. Cass County opted to implement the

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<sup>50</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Preparedness Guidance, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8: National Preparedness*. April 27, 2005.

study by designating the Fargo emergency manager to conduct an individual county-by-county assessment in the southeastern portion of North Dakota. Grand Forks, Burleigh and Ward Counties collectively agreed, due to time constraints, to pool resources by contracting services through the North Dakota League of Cities and Association of Counties (NDLC) to coordinate completion of the project in all other areas of the state.

During April 2005, DES met with the contractor from NDLC and the Fargo emergency manager on several occasions to discuss coordination of meetings with focus groups comprised of representatives of response disciplines, public officials, and the private sector. Both were asked to develop a single set of questions designed to stimulate discussion concerning implementation of the regional approach and a questionnaire or survey that would gauge levels of acceptance. Guidelines were also formulated for the Baseline Equipment Capability study. Subject matter experts (SMEs) in the areas of private and public health, fire/hazmat, law enforcement, EMS, public works, emergency management/administration, public safety communications and agriculture were selected. Each subject matter expert reviewed the 2005 DHS Authorized Equipment List, DHS Target Capabilities and Universal Task Lists, and then compiled a list of equipment for the specific discipline matched to the four-response capability levels defined in the State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy Program Jurisdiction Handbook.<sup>51</sup> Fire and hazmat SMEs also used National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards,<sup>52</sup> which included: NFPA 471, Responding to Hazmat Incidents; NFPA 472, Professional Competence of Hazmat Responders; NFPA 1991, Vapor Protective PPE for Hazmat Response; NFPA 1994, PPE for Chem/Bio Terrorist Incidents; NFPA 1999, PPE for Emergency Medical Operations; NFPA 1670, Operations & Training for Technical Rescue Incidents. Each SME was responsible for vetting the equipment list with the state associations representing each particular discipline.

In the latter part of April 2005, DES invited all emergency managers to homeland security briefings scheduled throughout the state and as part of the agenda, explained the relevance of the initiative. Because the four cities and counties in which each is located

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<sup>51</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy Program Jurisdiction Handbook*.

<sup>52</sup> *National Fire Protection Association Codes and Standards*, available at <http://www.nfpa.org/categoryList.asp?categoryID=124&URL=Codes%20and%20Standards>, accessed August 6, 2005.

normally garner more state and federal funds, there is often an element of resentment displayed by smaller jurisdictions. However, there was no negative feedback during the meeting.

In early May 2005, DES and the two contractors refined focus group discussion and survey questions, which were vetted during several meetings with local and tribal emergency managers. In late May 2005, the contractors and DES personnel briefed BCI, HP, NDCST and the North Dakota Health Department to obtain input regarding the action plan.

On June 1, 2005, DES and the coordinators finalized the action plan for the Anchor Community study, which included the final presentation, discussion questions and survey.

Potential participants were selected based upon the response disciplines established by DHS: Fire/hazmat, law enforcement, healthcare, public health, emergency management, administration, public works, public safety communications, and emergency medical services. A total of 1,675 invitational letters were sent to county commission chairs, county auditors, county emergency managers, county sheriffs, county highway superintendents, county health representatives, city mayors, city auditors, city administrators, city police chiefs, city public works directors, city and rural fire chiefs, emergency services, ambulance directors, regional bioterrorism coordinators and tribal governments.

Local and tribal emergency managers determined evening meetings would ensure better participation since many attendees would be volunteers. However, two counties opted to hold focus groups in the afternoon since there was a more even mixture of full time and volunteer participants.

Seventeen focus group meetings were conducted throughout the state from June 22 through July 13. The NDLC contractor conducted six meetings in the northeast (Grand Forks, Devil's Lake), northwest (Minot, Williston), and southwest (Bismarck, Dickinson) corners of the state. The Fargo emergency manager conducted meetings in eleven of 13 counties (Barnes, Sargent, Lamoure, Stutsman, Richland, McIntosh, Traill, Ransom, Logan, Steele, and Cass Counties) comprising the southeast corner of the state.

Dickey and Griggs counties encountered emergencies, which precluded representatives from participating. Two hundred twenty-eight people attended the focus groups meetings.

The same presentation, questions, and surveys were used in each focus group. All meetings began with a presentation that explained the purpose of the study, the definition of anchor communities, the correlation between the universal task list and the anchor community concept, an explanation of the WMD response level definitions, and finally, the jurisdictional roles and responsibilities contained within the anchor community concept.

Following the presentation, questions were used to generate thoughts, ideas and discussion concerning homeland security and the Anchor Community concept as a potential solution to a regional approach in North Dakota.

## **B. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The most common gap identified related to lack of personnel, equipment, and funding, especially in rural areas, to effectively respond to a large incident involving hazardous materials. Issues of training and exercise were addressed by targeting anchor communities with the responsibility. Volunteer participants, due to financial and time constraints, believed anchor communities should be required to travel to jurisdictions to provide technical expertise for training and exercise. Participants believed there was a need for a more streamlined process to request resources. People indicated there is still confusion about responsibility for reimbursement of logistical expenses involving food, lodging, salaries and equipment when multiple agencies respond.

The state homeland security program was thought to lack good organization and planning. Some responders expressed concern that EMS had been omitted from the process.

Poor cell phone and radio reception in rural areas were identified. In many instances, there is absolutely no reception and in others, clarity is poor. In addition, not all communication frequencies are available throughout the state. In some jurisdictions, the state radio channel is unavailable, so responders must resort to using cell phones; if there is service.

The majority of respondents expressed that an anchor community system would promote resources sharing and could be the vehicle to reduce or eliminate the amount of paperwork required when requesting assistance from other jurisdictions and confusion about the points of contact when assistance is required. Feedback indicated a tiered, regional response system would help create a database of resources in the state; those from rural jurisdictions expressed it would be especially helpful for them to know the type and location of resources available. EMS personnel explained a tiered, regional response system would be the only method by which they could respond to a large incident.

A majority of the rural responders were concerned a regional system would create “haves” and “have nots”. They recognized the necessity of having resources available to assist them in response, but strongly noted the need for continued homeland security funding in order to be able to provide appropriate initial response.

One to two hour response time was acceptable. Several indicated the initial or “evaluation team” should be able to respond within an hour. Responders from larger communities stated an advance team, depending upon the incident, could be enroute within 15-30 minutes. Others indicated conjecture concerning response time was somewhat irrelevant considering environmental conditions such as blizzards and severe cold.

The major requirement for an anchor community was keyed to full-time response discipline departments with a WMD performance offensive or advanced operation and technician capability levels to ensure an effective response to a CBRNE event. It was universally agreed upon that an anchor community must have the resources necessary to purchase equipment and sustain training and exercise, along with a commitment to respond to surrounding jurisdictions if homeland security funding is significantly curtailed or discontinued. It was deemed important that anchor communities should also have a local, operational 911 system. It was considered critical that the community have a hospital and an EMS capability certified as advanced life support (ALS).

Because Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks and Minot are considered performance offensive or advanced operations and technician level, there was support for those cities to serve as most technical tier of support. It was suggested Devils Lake, Dickinson,

Jamestown and Williston due to performance defensive level capabilities should form a secondary tier. In several groups, there was mention that the anchor community system should follow the statewide Special Weapons and Tactical (SWAT) team response plan. In reality, the SWAT plan has not yet been fully implemented. Discussion revealed that some rural areas possess a higher degree of capability than larger communities do and that the anchor community process must include this formulating tiered response protocols.

Responders stated anchor communities need to train and exercise with the smaller jurisdictions both individually and in the regional setting to ensure common protocols are agreed upon, understood and practiced by all jurisdictions. Volunteer participants, due to financial and time constraints, believed anchor communities should be required to travel to jurisdictions to conduct training and exercises.

Ninety percent of respondents believe the anchor community approach would accommodate human and resource sharing. Eighty-seven percent indicated anchor communities afforded more effective planning opportunities and will benefit local jurisdictions. Eighty-five percent thought anchor communities would accommodate development of a comprehensive statewide homeland security strategic plan. Eighty-one percent believed the approach would benefit respective response disciplines. Seventy-eight percent indicated anchor communities would lead to a more efficient method of equipment distribution.

It is apparent a high percentage of participants supported tiered resource sharing. In North Dakota, a majority of individuals who are skeptical and display a definite tendency to distrust motives behind ideas and processes to implement change traditionally attend focus meetings of this type involving shifts in policy affecting jurisdictional funding. When participation is low, normally there is a preponderance of negativity. Therefore, the extremely high number of participants in agreement or strong agreement was somewhat surprising.

One question that garnered less than 80 percent; 78 percent agreed and strongly agreed that anchor communities would accommodate a more efficient method of equipment distribution. The reason may lie in the fact that more concern was raised

when contemplating how individual equipment purchases may be affected when capability levels are evaluated and determined in a regional process and not arbitrarily assigned to align with wants.

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## **IV. LESSONS LEARNED**

The need for interoperability requires state, local and tribal emergency operations plan protocols be aligned to reflect standards and procedures established by the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan (NRP). Mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding that address interoperability will be important for continuity of response. Those agreements must take into account non-governmental organizations to ensure a broader capability.

Results of the process used to determine acceptance levels revealed the need to change certain methods if afforded the opportunity to proceed with the implementation phase. The benefits of expanding the invitee list will be studied, and will include RSVP requests. In addition to written invitations, multi-media sources will be employed to encourage participation. There will be a concerted effort to schedule meetings in late fall or during winter; late spring, summers and early fall often preclude farmer and ranchers. Future survey questions will be validated using university resources or private enterprise because more detailed statistical analysis will be necessary.

The decision to hire two independent contractors provided objectivity during focus group meetings. Without the presence of DES staff, participants could engage in honest, open dialog in discussing challenges facing North Dakota and viable solutions relating to regionalization.

The studies' results will provide the information necessary to assist DES with recommendations for future action, for building anchor communities and refinement of tiered equipment lists. In a time when limited funding inhibits the ability to effectively respond to an incident, the studies set the foundation for a strategic direction in adjusting to funding reductions while achieving homeland security.

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## V. CONCLUSION

Grassroots acceptance for the anchor community regionalization approach was overwhelming. Individuals at the local level realize regionalization is the most effective method for coordinating shared response efforts, equipment purchases as well as multi-jurisdictional training and exercising. This is extremely positive; regional implementation is a DHS national priority and the homeland security funding distribution formula may exclude a portion of the allocation to states that have not begun the process. North Dakota now has an opportunity to collaborate with local and tribal jurisdictions and response disciplines to move forward in planning regional implementation based upon the anchor community concept. A regional approach will deliver a more comprehensive needs and risk assessment as opposed to a myopic analysis limited by jurisdictional boundaries. This leads responders to realistically perceive funding priorities. Regionalization is pivotal in developing a comprehensive homeland security program strategy that incorporates both prevention and response.

Baseline equipment lists standardized for capability levels provide specific guidance, direction and clarity for equipment purchasing decisions and circumvents the complex and disjointed method currently in use. The lists forces first responders to honestly assess capability and will help achieve jurisdictional consensus in planning a tiered response. This is extremely important considering meeting participants indicated 69 percent of jurisdictions were at the awareness capability level.

The anchor community and its use of the baseline equipment lists specifically targets funding allocations predicated upon capability. Smaller jurisdictions were able to compare services available through regionalization to the amount and type each could provide citizens without an organized resource sharing process. It appears jurisdictions realize the significant benefit an anchor community provides in establishing an umbrella memorandum of understanding that delineates responsibilities and protocols, thereby, streamlines procedures for resources requests and eliminates confusion involved with logistical reimbursement. The high rate of acceptance indicates jurisdictions supported greater funding streams for larger entities because the tiered response returned

considerably more value than could be obtained from planning reasons protocols and equipment purchased in isolation. Regionalization can be interpreted as a force multiplier that delivers economy of scale.

While such assessments offer insights into a specific jurisdiction, an assessment of an area, or region, as a whole will provide a less myopic view and will outline the needs and capabilities for the region and the state. This perspective will enable such states as North Dakota to earmark limited funding efficiently to areas most needed. A broader based assessment will also lead to more selective purchases of equipment, and identify training and exercising necessary to sustain response capabilities. An assessment of a region's baseline capabilities will give first responders and communities a perspective on what they can feasibly accomplish in their jurisdictions and whether they are capable of preventing, preparing or responding to a WMD event. Assessments will provide the foundation for planning, training and exercising; they increase efficiency and effectiveness by providing tiered resources.

Themes evolving from responder input in North Dakota mirror those expressed through the nation. It was important that regionalization ensure the same training and exercising is shared with all jurisdictions to provide more efficient and effective process integration and coordination in response, logistic, and communication protocols as well as equipment purchases. Improving interoperable communications problems was a key issue anchor communities were expected to solve.

This study will be distributed to first responders, community leaders, emergency managers, response discipline association, DES Advisory Committee members, and the Governor's Office. Findings will be used to recommend efforts to initiate implementation of the anchor community as the regional model for North Dakota Homeland Security. However, the following considerations will accompany the recommendation:

- Ideas generated from focus group discussions should be introduced to the North Dakota Homeland Security Strategic Plan including the formation of anchor communities.
- A regional/state homeland security database developed for equipment and training is desirable.

- Committees should be formed to provide refinement of the multi-discipline based equipment/capability lists.
- Facilitating multi-jurisdictional training and exercised events should be expanded. This is good reason to further investigate other regional plans in North Dakota to find elements that may contribute positively to the anchor community concept. It is important to involve local and tribal prevention and response disciplines and community leaders in development of anchor communities and homeland security initiatives.

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